

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL SHOULD SUPPORT RESOLUTION TO EXTEND ITS MANDATES ON NICARAGUA FOR TWO YEARS

Amnesty International calls on UN Human Rights Council (HRC) member states to support draft resolution L.38, which extends the mandate of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua (GHREN) and the monitoring mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for a period of two years.

NICARAGUA CONTINUES TO EXPERIENCE A GRAVE HUMAN RIGHTS CRISIS

Amnesty International has observed with great concern the further deterioration of the human rights situation in Nicaragua since the HRC passed [resolution 49/3](#) on 31 March 2022.

Arbitrary detentions have continued, with local organizations and OHCHR [reporting](#) more than 200 people detained solely for exercising their rights as of December 2022. On 9 February 2023, authorities forcibly [exiled](#) 222 of those people from the country, after a court arbitrarily stripped them of their nationality the previous day. On 15 February, authorities stripped a further [94 people](#) of their Nicaraguan nationality solely for speaking out against the government and defending human rights, leaving them at risk of statelessness, in stark violation of international law. According to local organizations, more than [30 people remain detained](#) in the country solely for demanding and exercising human rights.

Serious human rights violations occurred during the country's November 2022 municipal elections, with the [OHCHR](#) describing the context as one of "repression of dissenting voices and undue restrictions on political rights and civil liberties". According to [local organizations](#), more than 40 people were detained in this context reportedly for exercising their civil and political rights.

The closure of civic space in Nicaragua has greatly accelerated during the past year, with OHCHR [reporting](#) more than 3000 civil society organizations shut down since 2018, more than half of which were closed between September 2021 and December 2022.

NICARAGUA REFUSES TO CO-OPERATE WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

In November 2021, Nicaragua started a two-year process [to withdraw from the Organization of American States \(OAS\)](#). In April 2022, authorities occupied the OAS headquarters in the country, which was [denounced](#) by the organization's Secretary General. On 24 March 2022, the Nicaraguan government also [expelled](#) the representative from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which had previously had access to verify detention conditions in the country. OHCHR has [reported](#) that during the course of 2022, Nicaragua failed to co-operate with various UN treaty body reviews, as well as a planned visit to the country in 2023 by the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (SPT). SPT and the UN Committee against Torture also released a [joint statement](#) in November 2022 denouncing a lack of co-operation by the Nicaraguan state. Nicaragua also has multiple requests, including many reminders, for country visits pending from several Special Procedures.

THERE IS LITTLE HOPE OF JUSTICE AT THE DOMESTIC LEVEL

Given the [lack of judicial independence](#) in the country – which has also been reflected in the [lack of judicial guarantees](#) relating to human rights issues in the country – it is highly unlikely that justice and accountability can be achieved in Nicaragua at the national level.

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

A [report](#) recently published by the GHREN has confirmed that the violations and abuses perpetrated in Nicaragua since 2018 constitute the crimes against humanity of “murder, imprisonment, torture, including sexual violence, deportation, and politically motivated persecution”. Given this determination, it is essential that the GHREN be given additional time and resources to expand upon these observations and identify individuals responsible.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL MUST EXTEND THE MANDATE OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS AND THE MONITORING MANDATE OF OHCHR FOR A FURTHER TWO YEARS

Given the increasingly dire human rights situation in Nicaragua, the continued lack of co-operation by the government with the international community, the abject lack of possibilities for justice at the domestic level, and the GHREN’s findings that crimes against humanity have been committed in the country, we call upon UN Human Rights Council member states to support draft resolution L.38, with a view to extending the mandate of the GHREN and the monitoring mandate of OHCHR for a further two years.

Presently, the Group of Experts remains the only independent UN mechanism with a mandate to investigate abuses and systematic violations and to support accountability for perpetrators. A renewed two-year mandate will allow the experts sufficient time to continue to gather evidence on the serious human rights violations and crimes under international law still being committed and provide valuable recommendations. A two-year extension of OHCHR’s monitoring mandate will allow for sustained reporting that will enable UN member states to continue deliberations on the overall human rights situation in Nicaragua, including on key issues surrounding civic space.

Amnesty International believes that member states of the UN Human Rights Council must take firm action to break the cycle of impunity in Nicaragua and lay the groundwork for future accountability. The Group of Experts should be allowed to continue their work in order to: investigate serious human rights violations in Nicaragua; to identify those potentially responsible up to the highest levels in the chain of command; and to document and preserve evidence.

We therefore urge member states of the UN Human Rights Council to support the currently tabled draft resolution, to renew the mandate of the Group of Experts and the monitoring mandate of the OHCHR for two years. We further call on UN member states to co-sponsor this draft resolution and support accountability for grave violations in Nicaragua.